

STATE OF VERMONT  
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Docket No. 6860

Petitions of Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. )  
(VELCO) and Green Mountain Power Corporation )  
(GMP) for a certificate of public good, pursuant to )  
30 V.S.A. Section 248, authorizing VELCO to )  
construct the so-called Northwest Vermont )  
Reliability Project, said project to include: (1) )  
upgrades at 12 existing VELCO and GMP )  
substations located in Charlotte, Essex, Hartford, )  
New Haven, North Ferrisburgh, Poultney, Shelburne, )  
South Burlington, Vergennes, West Rutland, )  
Williamstown, and Williston, Vermont; (2) the )  
construction of a new 345 kV transmission line from )  
West Rutland to New Haven; (3) the reconstruction )  
of a portion of a 34.5 kV and 46 kV transmission line )  
from New Haven to South Burlington; and (4) the )  
reconductoring of a 115 kV transmission line from )  
Williamstown to Barre, Vermont – )

Order entered: 5/2/2008

**ORDER RE APPROVAL OF TREE-CLEARING PLANS**

On April 7, 2008, Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. ("VELCO") filed tree-clearing plans for the Bostwick Road and Meach Cove areas, and information regarding some minor changes to pole locations, with the Public Service Board ("Board"). On April 14, 2008, VELCO filed clearing plans for the Queen City substation area. In this Order, we approve these plans.

**Bostwick Road and Meach Cove**

In response to VELCO's April 7 filing, several parties indicated that additional plans depicting the area north of the April 7 plans were necessary. On April 24, 2008, VELCO filed the additional plans.

The Department of Public Service ("Department") filed comments on April 30, 2008, stating that it does not object to plans. However, the Department states that the plans are unclear with respect to whether vegetation under twelve feet in height would be retained in the right-of-way and recommends that such vegetation be retained. Additionally, the Department recommends that a post-construction site visit be conducted to determine if additional aesthetic mitigation is required in the area.

On April 30, 2008, VELCO filed a letter stating that it had discussed the issue of retaining trees under twelve feet in height with the Department. VELCO states that it will retain all compatible tree species that have heights of twelve feet or less. VELCO defines a compatible tree species as one that matures at a height of twelve feet or less. VELCO represents that the Department agrees with this clarification.

On April 30, 2008, we received a public comment by Richard Reid requesting that the Board investigate various environmental issues associated with the line clearing and conduct site visits both before and after the tree clearing has taken place. In particular, Mr. Reid raises questions regarding the impact of the clearing on wildlife habitat, soil erosion, archaeological resources, and the placement of wood chips. For the most part, these issues have already been addressed in this Docket and do not need to be addressed here. One additional issue raised by Mr. Reid is the lack of information regarding access roads. Because the plans filed with the Board do not include any access roads, the approval of these plans does not include any clearing associated with access roads.

We approve the April 7 and April 24 plans, including the relocation of the poles indicated within the April 7 plans, with the requirement that VELCO retain compatible tree species in the right-of-way that are twelve feet or less in height except where such clearing is required for anchors and guy wires. VELCO's April 30 letter indicates that, in certain circumstances, VELCO will retain incompatible species within the right-of-way if the individual tree is short enough that it will not have grown above twelve feet during VELCO's four-year vegetation management cycle. We direct VELCO to exercise its discretion in these areas to retain incompatible tree species to the extent possible. In addition, the Board will conduct a site visit after construction

and clearing are complete, and we retain jurisdiction to require additional aesthetic mitigation if necessary.

Queen City

No party filed objections to the April 14 plans. We approve the plans but will conduct a site visit after construction and clearing is complete, and retain jurisdiction to require additional aesthetic mitigation if necessary. VELCO shall retain compatible tree species in the right-of-way that are twelve feet or less in height, except where such clearing is required for anchors and guy wires, and shall exercise its discretion to retain incompatible tree species to the extent possible.

SO ORDERED.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 2008.

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|                 | ) | PUBLIC SERVICE |
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| s/David C. Coen | ) | BOARD          |
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|                 | ) | OF VERMONT     |
| s/John D. Burke | ) |                |

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

FILED: May 2, 2008

ATTEST: s/Susan M. Hudson  
Clerk of the Board

*NOTICE TO READERS: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Board (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: psb.clerk@state.vt.us)*